

**Remarks of Lt. Governor Skillman  
At the Women in Business Seminar,  
hosted by the Office of Community and Rural Affairs  
Elkhart, IN  
June 29<sup>th</sup>, 2011**

Thank you, David. David Terrell is our Director at the Office of Community and Rural Affairs, a businessman who is using his talent to serve in state government. He does an excellent job, but I'm afraid he's a little outnumbered today!

Welcome to the Advancing Women in Business Seminar! I love the first few minutes before these events start. You can hear the buzz and feel the energy in the room. It's very encouraging for this community and our state.

This is my 12<sup>th</sup> visit to Elkhart County since 2005. I've been here for many special occasions over the years, and today is no exception. Whether you're a resident of Elkhart County or hail from somewhere outside the county, I'm glad you came out today for the seminar.

This is our fifth summer for holding the Women in Business seminars throughout the state. We've met in three or four cities every summer. This is our second seminar this summer. We were in Bedford last week, and tomorrow we'll travel to Lafayette.

With these seminars, we try to provide a tool to connect business women with the people and resources they need to be successful. And, I hope you leave here today refreshed and encouraged to pursue your business goals.

Elkhart County has been the focus of a lot of national attention during the difficult economic times we've faced over the past few years. But we're seeing improvements here that are important for Indiana and the entire country. Personally, I'm encouraged to be here today and

see how many women are taking part in the recovery, and making their mark on the business community.

I try to do my part, too. In September, I will lead a trade mission to China and Japan, to hopefully bring back more business opportunities for Hoosiers.

Last year, I spent 10 days in China, leading a 26-member delegation on an agriculture and energy trade mission. Only six women traveled in the delegation.

I've found, when I travel abroad, our foreign trade partners often make the mistake of assuming I'm a man. I can't count the number of times I've seen my name written in advance as "Mr. Becky Skillman." But no harm done.

We first visited Indiana's sister-state, Zhejiang Province, they have one female vice-governor. She's serving her state in partnership with six male vice-governors, and she reminded me that female leadership is still something rather rare there. I reminded her that rare things are also extremely valuable.

I'm grateful that we live in a country and culture that values female leadership. A Hoosier business woman is free to create, and to lead, and to set the bar high for herself. We have the freedom to pursue the things we're passionate about, to take calculated risks, and we even have the freedom to fail.

That's the spirit of entrepreneurship – the mindset that you are shaping your own future by your own success and failure – and it's something we have always prized here in Indiana.

We are blessed to live in a place where both sexes are free to compete, where business is thriving, and where economic opportunity is pursued relentlessly. And there's no excuse for NOT pursuing your dreams.

It's always been one of my priorities to seek out other women and encourage them to step into leadership roles. Whether it's business, or politics and government, it's always been important to encourage other women to get in the game.

During my 12 years in the Indiana Senate serving in leadership, I often tried to recruit women to run for open seats. All too often, the highly-talented women would tell me they were not qualified. When I talked to men about the same opportunities, to their credit, they think they were born qualified. It's an issue of confidence. So it's more important than ever that you encourage the women around you to do their best and to be confident.

Because Indiana – and this community – need every one of us to do our part. So we can put an end to these difficult economic times, and move forward into a new time of prosperity.

Indiana's economic health has always been our top priority. For seven years now, we've been pursuing economic development for big cities and small towns alike, and Indiana is one of the best places in the nation for you to do business.

Indiana has not been immune from the national economic problems, as you well know. We've struggled, and there are many Hoosiers who continue to struggle. We are continually working with existing companies to help them grow, and reaching out to others who may desire to locate in Indiana.

We continue to receive national and international recognition of the favorable business climate here. In 2010, Indiana was among the leaders in private sector job growth, with numbers at twice the national rate. And our state's economy has been recognized as having the third-highest growth rate in the country last year.

It's hard to imagine, but 2010 was our strongest year yet for new job commitments, since Governor Mitch and I came to office in 2005. And we're keeping that momentum up. So far this year, we have commitments for more than 11,200 new jobs statewide, and well over \$1.7 billion in private capital investments.

Here in Elkhart County, you are certainly attracting investments and new jobs. This month, Lippert Components Manufacturing announced plans to establish a new operation here in Elkhart, creating 180 jobs, investing nearly \$9 million. And in Bristol, Molded Foam announced an investment of \$3.8M and their commitment to create 45 new jobs.

We're also seeing new life in the RV industry – Nexus RV, a startup company, bringing new jobs and investment, and the homegrown Jayco RV company is expanding and putting Hoosiers back on the clock.

Over the past few years, the state worked closely with many of these companies. And yet, many businesses are growing without help from the state, of course.

I saw a wonderful report from Elkhart County's Economic Development Corporation this month – six manufacturers and a large distributor are adding 350 new jobs and investing nearly \$22M. (*source: Inside Indiana Business*)

- Kiel N.A. LLC (mfg. seats for busses and trains.)
- Deloro Stellite, LP (industrial coatings and metal castings)
- Dynamic Metals, LLC, (custom roll forming mfg)
- Kem Krest Corporation (automotive supply distributor)
- Molded Foam LLC, (molding urethane foam)
- Reliable Precision Machining (new metal fabrication division of Company)
- Utilmaster/Spartan Motors (mfg commercial vehicles)

I don't have to tell you that in Jan 2009, Elkhart County's unemployment rate was 18.3%. Last month, the rate was 10.1%. (That's lower than my home county's rate.) It's not satisfactory, but it is a huge drop.

Companies are clearly taking notice of Elkhart County once again. And around the state there has also been a lot of business activity. Let me give you a snapshot.

Just two weeks ago, one of Indiana's shining stars—Cummins—announced its THIRD expansion in a year, resulting in 600 jobs.

In April, we saw new job announcements in Huntington, Lebanon, and Indianapolis from companies that are starting up or relocating in Indiana. In May, companies announced expansions in Greendale, Fort Wayne, and of course Bristol's Molded Foam announcement. As you can see, growth is occurring in small towns and big cities alike.

We also signed deals with businesses in my hometown of Bedford – GM's third expansion – as well as companies in Wakarusa, Mooresville, Campbellsburg, Elberfeld and Portage - just in the past few weeks.

Announcements like this are the reason our state's 8.2% unemployment rate is much lower than the national rate for the first time since 2003. Conventional wisdom says Indiana will be among the last states to come out of a recession, because we are so highly industrialized, but we're faring better than many other states right now.

All of these things – from jobs announcements and shrinking unemployment, to our state's fiscal health –build on our strong foundation for business.

You know the old parable about the foolish man who built his house on the sand, and the wise man who built his house upon the rock? When the storm came, only one of the two was left standing.

I often look to that story to remind myself of what we are trying to do in state government. The storm has hit our nation hard for the last few years. And as I read about the new state executives that assumed office this year across the country, all of the articles talk about the mountains of debt they face, the rising taxes they must halt, or not, and the culture of corruption they must clean.

Our neighbor, Illinois, has raised the corporate income tax, individual income tax, and the cigarette tax by extraordinary amounts. This makes their business climate much less welcoming. So, you may know that we've started an advertising campaign to recruit jobs from Illinois over to Indiana. And it's

working. We've won 12 companies so far. Maybe you've seen the billboards, if you've been in northern Indiana or Chicago, or maybe seen slogan: "I'll annoy you by higher taxes?" We are also reaching out to California businesses.

You may think it's unfortunate that it becomes a competition among the states, always true, never more so than during tough economic times. Of course, Indiana has some challenges ahead. But we maintained our strong foundation during tough economic times and now we can surge forward. Same is true for Elkhart county.

During this recently ended legislative session, we took steps to maintain our low cost of doing business by cutting corporate income taxes by nearly 25% going forward.

That means Indiana is not coming after businesses for a greater share of the tax burden. That is perhaps even more important to the survival of small business.

I consider Indiana's army of small businesses to be our best hope for economic rejuvenation. And that means many of you in this room.

Small business employs nearly half of our state's private sector work force. So ultimately, our economic health depends on how well our small businesses do. If they are growing, adding just one or two jobs a year, increasing revenue just a few thousand dollars at a time, that represents a huge leap forward for Indiana.

We know from experience that government cannot create prosperity. It's the work of individuals and risk takers, like you. What government can do is help create an environment where prosperity is possible.

In 2010, our state's Small Business Development Center helped start 253 businesses. Among the new women-owned businesses are Children's Physical Therapy Services, Ladies Golf Apparel, and a Gift-Basket Business - just to name a few.

Another way we help women is through Women Owned Business certification. That puts you at the top of the list for state government contracts. Government contracts are a great way to expand your business. There are a lot of needs, lots of purchases in state government, and we keep track of who we're working with as we serve Hoosiers.

Right now, nearly 1,400 women-owned businesses are certified with the state. And it couldn't be easier to certify your business.

State government is here to provide a helping hand to the business community wherever we can. Whether business is big or small, we want to see it prosper.

We all have some big responsibilities right now, and a lot of work to do. But if we do our jobs right, Indiana will continue to be in a good position.

We all have a part to play in the long-term economic recovery of our state. And right now, we need strong women like you who want to get our communities moving, and make us stronger than ever.

You are the ones who care about the future of our communities and the future of our state. You are a big reason Indiana will see a complete economic comeback. Thanks for all you do, and enjoy the day!